

Government Reform and Restructuring Commission
Verona Town Hall

Augusta County Government Center
July 14, 2010- 5:30-7:00

Town Hall Commission Attendees: Senator Mark Obenshain, Delegate Glen Oder, Mr. Howard Estes
Commission Staff Director: Andrew Lamar

Opening

Senator Obenshain introduced the commission and its mission and thanked Augusta County and its board of supervisors for helping facilitate the meeting. Gerald Garber head of the Augusta County Board of Supervisors thanked the commission for holding the town halls and emphasized avoiding merely shifting cost in the name of reform. Delegate Oder, Mr. Estes and Mr. Lamar introduced themselves and spoke briefly of some of their activities with the commission so far.

Public Comments

- Delegate Steve Landes advised evaluating the Virginia Economic Development Authority and possibly consolidating it and other agencies and having the three existing Inspector Generals report directly to Cabinet Secretaries.
- Ms. Cindy George said the state government should use local treasurers to help collect delinquent state taxes instead of using private collection agencies.
- Mr. D.E. Hite suggested if a citizen goes to court with VDOT the law should dictate that whichever side loses the case pays the court fees.
- Ms. Bonnie Johnson said that when the state cuts funding for localities it must cut mandates as well and the state should work with localities on local budgets.
- Mr. Robin Sullenberger stated the Council for Rural Virginia needed resources to help with economic development and that redundancies in state government needed to be eliminated such as in workforce agencies which are highly redundant.
- Mr. Steve Morris suggested: changing the use it or lose it budget system for state agencies and sending unused agency budget funds back to the general fund, filling vacant positions in the Department of Corrections or ceasing to fund them, removing state agency higher ups from state provided housing, building more centralized larger prisons that could hold up to 300,000, and having state agencies stop procuring from correctional enterprises.
- Mayor Lacy King stated 599 funding needs to go to police officers, and their needs to be a discussion on whether constitutional officers are to be eliminated instead of just reducing their funding over time.
- Rachael Bavister said the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing should not be merged under other agencies but should instead be expanded.
- Mr. Greg Ridenour suggested raising the 5% commission private retailers currently get for selling state lottery tickets, and keeping ABC stores but allowing licensed private stores to buy Liquor from ABC and re-sell it at their own businesses.
- Ms. Jean Shrewsbury suggested: the DMV and the Department of Taxation needed to partner with local Commissioners of Revenue to make customer one stops for citizens, there should be local registration for state taxes and local taxes, the state should use local Commissioners of Revenue to help in auditing the state sales and meal taxes, DMV select offices should be expanded, and citizens should be able to register for state business licenses at the local level.

- Mr. Rudy Bazzret stated vacant positions in state agencies should be eliminated, wardens of state prisons shouldn't have state provided trucks, and citizens should be able to vote on having gambling boats on state rivers.
- Mr. Jeff Weeks said the Department of Rehabilitative services needed more funding which could help increase the state's workforce.
- Ms. Carolyn Dull said: Virginia should abolish the Dillon Rule, in the event of ABC privatization localities should have a say in where newly licensed private liquor stores are located, the state needs a shared central database for all agencies, state facilities should be converted to use warm season grasses for energy, the use it or lose budget system should be changed to allow agencies to save extra funds, and that users of state agency websites should have one shared login and password for all the websites.
- Mr. Bill Tueting suggested that committees and sub-committees in the general assembly should have open voting records and Virginia should eliminate sales tax holidays.
- Mr. Rusty Ford advised consolidating services provided by small cities and towns in close proximity to each other into regionally provided services.
- Ms. Claire Collins stated: small cities and towns should share regionally provided services, the Compensation board should be eliminated, the state should evaluate alternatives to incarceration, customer one stops are needed for state agencies, and a more defined system is needed for public private partnerships.
- Mr. Kurt Hodgen suggested letting the moratorium in Virginia on locality annexation of land expire.
- Mr. Bruce Elder said the state should: repeal the payday loan act and put back a usury cap at 30%, avoid privatizing or consolidating mental health services or services to the deaf and blind, and cease initiating constant studies designed to help eliminate agencies.

Closing:

The Commission members thanked the meeting attendees for their ideas and Senator Obenshain said further ideas could be submitted to the commission's website at reform.virginia.gov. Senator Obenshain adjourned the meeting at 7:15 PM.